

Message Text

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12
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT CH
SUBJECT: THE "MANDATE OF HEAVEN"

1. BESET BY AN INCREASING NUMBER OF NATURAL DISASTERS
INCUDING EARTHQUAKES, FLOODS, DROUGHTS, HAILSTORMS, AND
EVEN A METEORITE SHOWER, THE PRC LEADERSHIP IS MOST LIKELY
FACING INCREASING SPECULATION THAT THE "MANDATE OF HEAVEN"
IS PASSING FROM THE MAOIST LEADERSHIP. WHILE THE NATIONAL
MEDIA HAVE BEEN URGING THE POPULACE TO MEET THE "CHALLENGE
OF NATURAL DISASTERS" AND NOT TO FEAR HARDSHIP AND DEATH,
SEVERAL REFERENCES IN RECENT ARTICLES INDICATE THAT TRADI-
TIONAL BELIEFS STILL PRESIST ABOUT DYNASTIES CHANGING BY
AN ACT OF HEAVEN.

2. FOR INSTANCE, AN AUGUST RED FLAG ARTICLE BY PI SHENG
SPEAKS OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE "UTTERING SUCH NONSENSE"
AS APPROACHING THE "BRINK OF COLLAPSE" AND CHINA BEING
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"THREATENED BY GROWING CRISES". MORE SPEFICICALLY, AN AUGUST

14 FRONT-PAGE PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE DISCUSSING THE ROLE OF TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY IN LINKING THE ANTI-TENG CAMPAIGN WITH QUAKE RELIEF CASTIGATES ADVOCATES OF THE THEORY OF THE "MANDATE OF HEAVEN" (TRANSLATED BY NCNA AS "ORDINANCES OF HEAVEN"). CLOAKED IN A HISTORICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CONFUCIANISM, THE ARTICLE HOLDS THAT THE LEGALIST WANG AN-SHIH (LEADER OF THE "CORRECT" PHILOSOPHY) STATED: "HEAVEN AND EARTH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH MAN'S AFFAIRS. ECLIPSES AND EARTHQUAKES ARE GOVERNED BY THEIR OWN LAWS AND THERE IS NO NEED TO STAND IN AWE OF THEM".

3. COMMENT: WE STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT THE COMBINATION OF MAO'S APPROACHING DEATH, THE UNCERTAIN LEADERSHIP SITUATION, INCREASED PROVINCIAL FACTIONALISM AND SERIOUS NATURAL DISASTERS HAVE FOSTERED A RIPE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE GENERATION OF SUCH RUMORS. HOWEVER, THE COMPETENT HANDLING OF QUAKE RELIEF IN THE TANGSHAN AREA WILL PROBABLY HELP TO OFFSET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS FAILING TO MEET ITS INCREASING CHALLENGES.
CROSS

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